1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1889) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

elders having great weight, and, as I shall subsequently point out, even the women are not excluded from a share in the politics of the tribe.

Though more or less dominated by the numerous conquerors who have successively, for three thousand years, overrun those regions which are now called Kürdistan, the Kürds have never ceased to own a distinct nationality. Since the Ottoman conquest they have been constantly wavering between the two rival powers of Islam—the Sunnis and the Shias, as represented by the Turks and the Persians respectively, siding, according to the exigencies of the time, now with one party and now with the other. Notwithstanding their sufferings in the destructive wars of conquest waged for centuries by Turk and Persian, and the constant internal feuds fomented by both those nations in order to weaken the power of the Kürdish warriors, they still maintain a sort of semi-independence, preserving their nationality as distinct from that of their neighbours as in earlier days, though possessing no dynasty, political constitution, ancient religion, historical traditions, or literature, to bind them together.

Three times during the present century have national aspirations incited them to throw off the Turkish yoke; but owing to the immense extent of mountainous country over which they are scattered, their successes have been but partial and sugatory. Representatives as they probably are of the ancient Chaldeans, no other race has, perhaps, so long preserved its nationality under conditions so unfavourable.

against this people and, in many instances, their ignorance or modesty. This may be seen from one of the more recent examples:

> Some of them are farmers and shepherds, but most of them are robbers. If a Kurd has not killed six or seven men, he is not respected and considered worthy to live. My father once told me a story he heard from one of the Kurdish chiefs. He said he had a son who was very bashful, and this was considered quite a disgrace, for one of these chiefs is always made leader in case of war. It would also be impossible for him to marry one of the best girls unless he was a successful thief and robber. He carries with him a gun and a sword, and no matter how bloody or evil the deed he commits may be, it only adds respect and honor to his name.[1]

The sanguine reputation is not wholly without reserve. In older times the Kurdish chieftains were not above plundering expeditions from their mountains and in recent years have proven incorrigible revolutionists, for reasons which will be considered in this study. This has not endeared them to their co-religionists among the Arabs, Iranians, and Turks. Secondly, many Kurds served in the Hamidiye, the irregular bodies of reactionary troops organized by the Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid to crush incipient liberal and nationalistic movements in the tottering Ottoman Empire, and the Armenians and other Christians who suffered from their depredations, as well as missionaries and diplomats in Europe, have been loud in their denunciation of the Kurdish nation as a whole. Lastly, the blood feud and brigandage are well known in Kurdistan itself. The first is not connected with outlawry, but acts to emphasize a bloodthirsty reputation, and the

[1]Soane, 1913, p. 183.

and it is important not to confuse the level of the intellectual sophisticate, a free Kurdish consciousness, with that which the chieftains and their people are now striving to preserve, a society quite within the state.

The Kurds, occupying a mountainous terrain, were but superficially governed by the Iranian and Ottoman governments. Inasmuch as the roads were poor or the country impossible for artillery, the Kurds, a well-armed people, were usually the military equals of their governors. The control of the Iranians and Turks was thus largely confined to the maintenance of police posts and army installations and the attempt, often in vain, to maintain public order and collect a few taxes. Helmut von Moltke, writing in 1838, notes:

> It is a well-known fact that the Ottoman empire comprises that region in which the Turks exercise an real authority. It is certain that the Pashalik (the Turkish fiefdom) has to reconquer widespread regions within the territory of its own state. To this category belong the highlands (of Kurdistan) between the Tigris and the Persian frontier.[1]

In recent decades, however, the Kurds, actively in Iraq and Turkey, have been subjected to the full impact of the modern state and some remarkable changes, comparable to similar developments elsewhere in the Middle East, are beginning to take place, challenging the whole structure of their society. This last, as will be seen, is one which is at once tribal and feudal, formerly directed by a hundred aristocracy. A

[1] Quoted in Gottwaldt, 1958, p. 38.

independence from the Porte in the early decades of the nineteenth century. A ruined fortress of this leader is to be seen a short distance north of the town, and his descendants, the House of Imam'Ali Beg, still own much of its property. The Porte, who appreciated the strategic significance of Rewandus with relation to the trade route and the possibility of a military advance along this line from Erevan, made it the seat of a mütesarrif, an Ottoman governor, subject to the Eyalet vanlyi (district) of the Vilayet (province) of Mosul. Administratively it was equal in rank to Erbil, and immediately prior to the first World War had one or two battalions of infantry stationed nearby, as well as a police detachment. As a part of the sanjaqlyq of Iraq, it is now much more of an administrative than a commercial center and is still under a mütesarrif, but directed beneath the control of Erbil.

In Ottoman times Rewandus was a flourishing town of about a thousand houses and had a population estimated at 5000. It occupied a sloping tongue of land, running east and west along the Rewandus river. The river was joined just above the town, to the west, by another stream flowing through a gorge then called the Balund, and above this juncture rose a great bluff, several hundred feet above the floor of the valley, termed Qala Tilek (Kurdish, qelaÇ, "fortress"). The flat top of this bluff was occupied by the house of Ja'fir Beg, a descendant of Sar Dashu, the Milan of the Turkish officers, some summer residences of

CHAPTER II

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

To give a description of Rowandiz, its administrative and economic importance, as well as its social and religious life, demands a certain excursus above and beyond the actual physical limits of the town. To understand the role of the town, not only as a rural center, but in broader cultural horizons, one must have some understanding of the areas within which it lies. It is not intended to enter into an exhaustive discussion of either regional cultures or of a civilization, for that presupposes a much more extended survey than either the basis or the framework of this study can support, but rather to indicate the proper perspective in which the town must be viewed. The most convenient beginning to this task is not to be found in an economic or social background, but in the government, for in proceeding from its delineation, in many cases generalized with respect to district and to nation, an effective appreciation of later discussion can be formed.

Then a clearer definition of the position of Rowandiz as an administrative center requires in some wise an appreciation of the constitution of Iraq itself, on whose northeastern border lies the district dominated by the town. A segment of the old Ottoman Empire, the territory of modern Iraq was

rated from the Turks during the First World War and thereafter recognized as an independent state, temporarily assigned as a mandate to Great Britain. The early organization of the country took place under British guidance, and was defined by an "Organic Law" of 1924 as a limited monarchy with a responsible government. The legislative bodies consist of a Chamber of Deputies (Majlis al-Nuwwab) of elected representatives and a Senate (Majlis al-A'yan) of nominated elder statesmen. One of the salient features of this government is that, aside from the deputies, no other public official is elected by popular suffrage, from the Prime Minister to the village postmaster. It is very much as if the citizens of the United States voted only on members to the House of Representatives, and all other officers concerned with public life were appointed by a central government in Washington, D. C. In Iraq there are, to be sure, local "advisory councils" to the governors, but their membership is in practice selective. On the contrast of elections themselves there is much variation of opinion, and, without failing to one side or the other, it is possible to say quite fairly that neither the electorate or the Chamber itself have fully realized the possibilities of the democratic power within their hands. There is thus, not only among the Kurdish minority, but in many quarters in Iraq, a strong popular sentiment, correct or incorrect, that even their elected officials improperly or impotently represent the people.

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One of the advantages of appointment in this fashion 648
is that it permits the central government to provide properly qualified officials, responsible to higher authority, rather than relegate their selection to the whim of the voter. On the other hand, the official appointed in Baghdad almost always comes from a different town, and usually from a different province, than that to which he is assigned. Moreover, although there is no bar to any person rising in the government, the old middle and upper-class Turkish and Arab families of Iraq, who furnished officers andofficials to the Ottoman cadre, tend to dominate the ranks of the new monarchy as the wealthy, educated class. Thus, because there is little immediate community of 648
interest between governor and governed, there is the poten- 662
tiality of the use of office for the furtherance of personal and on a local level, and, on the higher levels in Baghdad itself, the acquisition of government positions by the influence of family or wealth. None of these things, however, should in any way be construed as an accusation of dereliction, particularly in the administration of the Rowandus district, but even the possibility of malfeasance has an easily imaginable effect on a people as nationally sensitive as the Kurds. Of more cogent importance, however, is the fact that the administration of Rowandus lies in the hands of persons on the whole alien to the community itself, and the social implications of the presence of this new class shall be examined in some detail. [186]

At the head of the executive branch of government, subject, of course, to legislative or royal check, are the ministers, from whose various departments all public officers are appointed. Following in general the old Ottoman lines, the country is divided into fourteen livas, each under a mutasarrif. The liva is subdivided into qadhas, each under a qaimmaqam. The qadha is in turn subdivided into a number of nahiyas, each under a mudir. Large towns have a rais beladiya appointed by the government whose office is responsible for the intricacies of metropolitan administration. The people have a mukhtar, selected from the local inhabitants, who, while in no sense a public official, acts as liaison between his fellows and the mudir, a role exactly comparable to that of the 'umda in contemporary Egypt.[1]

631. 648 [622]

The qadha or district of Rowandus belongs to the Erbil liva, and is subdivided into five nahiyas. The sedentary population of these, as well as the number of villages, is listed here for 1950, as furnished by the census officer of Rowandus. In spite of this official's labors in reducing a difficult problem, it is necessary to regard these figures with some reservation, for the Kurds, like many of their contemporaries in the Middle East and like the Israelites of old, regard inquiries into their numbers with the strongest suspicion. Similarly, the "village" here referred to may vary from a few isolated

631 162 361. [186]

[1] Ayrout, 1945, pp. 47-48.

a great number of animals, thus partially explaining the seemingly small figure for "nomads" cited above. 233 [162]

In spring the kotchir are on the move, leading their flocks of sheep and goats from winter pasturage around Mosul and Erbil to summer grazing in the hills and mountains. The passes and defiles are filled with their animals, an annoying impasse to swift communication, and their black tents line the watercourses and trails. As winter approaches they return once again from the uplands, seeking the warmth of the Jazira plain. In former days their passage could often be turbulent. Because of his flocks, the kotchir must get through, and was accustomed to fight a way if none peaceful could be found. Much of this has lately been changed, for police vehicles with automatic weapons are strong arguments against violence, and the construction of better roads has greatly facilitated movement, although the nomad still has the right of way after dark, and moving a vehicle through the sea of animals blinking in the headlights is difficult. Even then the kotchir constitute one of the most difficult administrative problems of a qaimaqam, such as that of Rowandus. He must arbitrate their quarrels in passage (usually a sheep missing from the nomad, or transient flocks in a villager's field) as well as those they cannot settle among themselves. Lastly, as many cross the national border into Iranian Azerbaijan, the qaimaqam of Rowandus must arrange their transfer twice each year with the authorities of that country.

221 233 [625] [491] [693] [648]

because of a feud. Lastly it remains to mention the Barzani, formerly one of the most powerful groups in the district. In the series of events which followed the withdrawal of the Russian army from Azerbaijan in 1946, one of the Barzani chieftains, Mulla Mustafa, was forced to flee to the Armenian S.S.R. and the tribe was theoretically broken up. Officially the Barzani no longer exist, but in the popular mind they are much alive. If a policeman or another is shot in a remote district, the deed is usually attributed to "the Barzani," a convenient testimony for the qaimmaqam's court. 622 619

The administrative control of an extensive mountainous area inhabited by a scattered population of some 55,000 poverty-stricken farmers and shepherds, most of whom belong to an ethnic group noted for its unruliness, is not without its difficulties, and requires of the qaimmaqam and his officials the extensive daily exhibition of qualities, among them unlimited patience and a fine sense for popular opinion, rarely demanded of similar magistrates in Europe or North America. Locally, in the nahiya, the greater part of the burden rests almost completely with the mudir and his several assistants, for within his own sphere he is given much of a free rein. It has been often and widely noticed that bureaucratic personnel in the Middle East far tend to outnumber and submerge the requirements of efficiency, but this is valid only for capitals and larger towns, for the distasteful tasks of rural order find but the barest of cadre. The 647 648

mudir, "exiled," in his own words, to the country, must account for a nahiya or sub-district, in this case with an average population of some 10,000 souls, with a staff of a few tax-assessors, clerks, a police detachment and servants which together usually numbers less than 30 or 40 men, less than 1/250th of such a population.

The lot of the typical mudir is not an enviable one. His chief tasks are those of the great trinity of Middle Eastern administration, the maintenance of order, the collection of taxes, and the selection of army recruits. Because these three demand most of his time and energy, other problems, such as public health, must suffer in comparison. The government headquarters in the central village of a nahiya is usually a decrepit one-storey outpost of mud-brick or rubble, built about an unpaved courtyard. It contains some offices, a guardroom and quarters for the police, and a primitive jail, and boasts neither plumbing, heating, or electricity. The mudir himself is assigned a house, but he can rarely have more than the minimum in furnishings, just as he usually cannot yet afford marriage. He is most often a younger man from 25 to 35 years of age, a lawyer by training, and in high hopes of some better favoured assignment. Moreover, he finds himself an alien in the community, not only because his origins are elsewhere, but also because his social rank does not seem to admit of free intercourse with those he governs. There are, to be sure, mudirs who take a great part in the social life of their nahiyas, but

they are most often older, more experienced men with wife and family. While given a free hand, the mudir is still often on the telephone to Rowanduz, if only to hear the voices of his fellow civil servants, and failing leave to visit Baghdad, Mosul, or some other center of "civilization," seeks every opportunity to find their company in the center itself. "Here I am," said one mudir, "in this village where there is no club, no restaurant, no cinema, and no friends. And after sundown it's all finished."

The mudir and his problems will be found again later, for it is necessary here to return to Rowanduz itself and the more important question of the area as a whole. Of the several government buildings in Rowanduz, that which commands primary attention, as it does of the inhabitants of the district, is the serai, so termed after Ottoman custom, for it contains the offices of the qaimmaqam and most of his staff, and is the physical center of the district government. The serai is one of the first buildings to be encountered in the town, standing a hundred yards from the edge of the bluff and commanding a magnificent view of the valley. It is a large, dun-colored, rectangular structure of plastered brick surrounding a partially paved interior court wherein a few rugged trees are to be found. The front of the building is of two storeys, unlike the other three sides which are of one, and is pierced by a large, arched gateway where one or two policemen mount guard during the day. Within the arch is a long brick bench on which a

grievances of the former and explaining and facilitating 622
the operations of the latter. He is called upon to certify certain government documents, such as an order for a young man's conscription, together with two chosen old men who act as witnesses. Ra'uf Effendi claimed to be assisted by two informal "agents" who brought him secretly the news circulating in the town, probably his own device for keeping in regular touch with popular opinion. Socially the office of mukhtar presupposes a qualification of wealth, for he [556] [574]
is expected to maintain a diwankhana (a room in his house in which guests of social distinction could be appropriately received and entertained). Although Rowanduz itself is non-tribal and the people as a whole pay no allegiance to a chieftain, it will be seen in comparison with later exposition that the mukhtar, with several other wealthy men, [554]
occupies a position in society analogous to that of an aristocrat. In fact, a girl, castigated by her relatives [627]
in a love affair, may seek sanctuary in the house of the mukhtar, a custom which is solely reserved for chieftains in the countryside. Such a case occurred in 1949 and Ra'uf Effendi was able to smooth over the affair, arranging the girl's marriage with the youth in question.

In closing this section it remains to contrast the 175 634 648
present administration of the district with that of the Ottoman Empire immediately prior to the first World War. In that time Rowanduz was the seat (a kaza) of a qaimmaqam under the Kirkuk sanjaq of the vilayet of Mosul. Administratively it was thought as important as Erbil and, as

today, a number of troops were garrisoned there. With respect to Erbil, the administrative equality has been changed, although a fifth nahiya added to the Ottoman four. It cannot be said that the Ottoman administration with its officers, judges, tax-collectors, and its serai was too different in outward form from that of today. The knowledge of bureaucratic government is nothing new to the district. In contrast to the present administration, however, the Turks were extremely venal, but it cannot be legitimately said, as it is with respect to other former Ottoman holdings, that they were vicious. While there were often skirmishes between segments of the population and the Ottoman gendarmes and troops, there is no particular recollection of Turkish "atrocities" in the area, for in the nineteenth century the Kurds, at home in their mountains, were the military equals of their opponents. The opening of new roads and the adoption of modern arms has changed much of this, and the Kurd has learned to respect automatic weapons, artillery, and aircraft. In a number of regards, such as education and public health, it can be seen that the new government enters much more completely into the interests of the people, and, according to popular opinion, has subverted many functions formerly reserved to the chieftains alone. In summary, it appears that the administration today is at once more rigorous and more enlightened than that of Ottoman times.

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In conclusion certain observations on the present administration may be reinforced. It can be observed how

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little the people, aside from a personage like the mukhtar, are able to participate in their own government. Rowanduz, as the physical center of this government, exerts a powerful influence as well as a formal control not only over the townspeople but over the district as a whole. Such an administration, while in no sense new or unique, has extended the range of its activities into a great part of the people's life, and it is impossible to deny its relevance as the most powerful determinant in the change of local culture. Lastly, a new "elite" of civil officials and officers, alien to the area, make up its directing personnel and add a new element, reinforced by prestige and power, to the older form of society.

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or religious. In Ottoman times, while it[1] was an administrative center under Turkish rule, Rowanduz had considerable importance because it lay astride the trade route between Iran and Erbil, and from Erbil the Jazira plain and Syria, and a great volume of caravan trade passed through its gates. Today the automobile road constructed by British engineers bypasses the town and commerce following the old direction need have no reference to the town itself. With an obvious political background, the British mandate in Iraq and the withdrawal of Bolshevik Russia from Middle Eastern affairs, much of this same trade has dwindled. Prior to the first World War, a great part of the manufactured goods, like those of the general merchant listed above and merchandised in Iranian Azerbaijan and northern Iraq, came from Russia, porcelain, glassware, metalware, cloth, samovars, kerosene, and the like, some of the more precious items still preserved in Rowandux households as family heirlooms. With the British domination of the markets of Iraq, the focus of trade for this area has shifted almost completely from the north to the south. One never sees an item manufactured in the Soviet Union in the <u>bazar</u> of Rowandux. It may be supposed that the Turks selected Rowandux as a seat of government because of this importance in trade, and the administrative demotion of the town under Erbil, where formerly the two were equals, can be taken as a reflection of commercial decline.

It has been seen that the only important produce of

[1] [i.e., the town of Rowanduz.--Analyst]

Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, and Turks. There are Persian 563
minorities in the cities of central and southern Iraq, but they fall under the religious classification of Shi'ah and there seems to be no conflict between them and Arabs of their own persuasion. The Turks are few in number and are concentrated in the middle and upper classes. In the days before the liberation of Iraq, there was bitter enmity toward the Turks as the representatives of Ottoman rule, but this has disappeared in recent years and there is no restriction, as, indeed, there never was, on marriage between members of this class and Sunnite Muslims, Arabs and Kurds, of comparable status. [582] A survey of the lists of officials and army officers reveals the remarkable extent to which the survivors of Ottoman rule have retained their position in the government service. The Turkomans are gathered in central and northeastern Iraq, mainly about Altun Keupri and Koi Sanjaq, and have been unspectacular in national affairs, largely farmers and shepherds, a remnant of the famous Horde of the White Sheep. [582] Again, there appears to be no restriction on marriage with Sunnite Muslims, but there is little reason for an Arab, Kurd, or Turk of the upper classes to take an illiterate, impoverished bride from among them.

The matter of Arab and Kurd is quite otherwise, for 186
in the case of the latter there is a well-armed minority 648
population, Muslims, and hence free of the susceptibilities 101
of religious attack, with a strong base in agriculture and animal husbandry. They are estimated at 400,000 persons,

and representatives of the same nation, totalling several millions, are hard by in Iran, Syria, and Turkey. There is some cause for apprehension as there have been no less than six armed Kurdish rebellions, some common to several of the four governments involved and quelled with difficulty, in the past twenty-five years. As in the case of most of the population, the royal family of Iraq is Arab and the language of government is Arabic. The spectre of Kurdish nationalism strikes terror in the hearts of government officials, and there is little love lost between Arab and Kurd. Many of the Kurds regard the Arabs as unlawful rulers, at the same time scorning them for the poverty and filth to be found in southern Iraq. "Are you an Arab?" a Kurdish man or woman often challenges a dirty child of the village, "Go wash yourself." On their part, the Arabs, particularly those of the upper classes, following the tradition of Xenephon, regard the Kurds with a mixture of fear and disgust. "Why do you waste your time with those people?" the investigator was asked by an Arab official, "they are all bandits." In spite of these things, there is no bar to intermarriage between the two groups, and any Kurd can rise to great prominence in the government service, although he is a priori under suspicion. In 1951 two of the fourteen provinces in Iraq were directed by Kurdish governors, and the command of the army unit at Rowandux was for a time given to a Kurdish staff officer.

In addition, there is a certain amount of rivalry between persons of different provinces or cities, for

2: Masters E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

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beggar who, among other things, performed such feats as eating pebbles for alms in the chaykhanas, as well as in one of the best-educated men of the community.

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Turning to the Rowandux district, it is possible to illustrate and to amplify these general remarks. First, there is a landed, hereditary aristocracy of Kurds. As far as one can gather from the meager histories of the area, the Kurds had been ruled by independent or semi-independent chieftains for an unknown period until Ottoman and Iranian power was able to extend its rule over them. This control, usually superficial, was never solidified until after the first World War. As rulers, the Kurdish chieftains led their people in war, arbitrated their quarrels, and, to some extent, directed their economy. In return for these things, they laid claim to a certain share of annual produce, animals or harvest. In some cases the chieftainship appears to have had certain democratic aspects, the new ruler, characteristically, but not necessarily, the eldest son of the deceased, selected from a noble household by an assembly of the tribesmen. In others it was purely aristocratic. As has been seen above, chieftains are many times associated with tribes, that is to say, there is no tribe without such a leader, but otherwise they are feudal overlords. Often a chieftain can be both the head of a tribal group and the "owner" of non-tribal lands and villages. The tenure of property illustrates this. Sometimes the land and flocks are owned by the

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the casualties are sustained by the chieftains and their 628
bodyguards, a sort of exchange of assassinations, and there is nothing which might be termed "total warfare." If a chieftain is engaged in a feud with another, he does not ordinarily try to kill off the other's peasantry or destroy their crops, but rather attempts the ambush of his adversary or that person's immediate relatives and followers. There are several examples to indicate that feuding parties do not like the idea of decisive contests. The causes of such conflicts are extremely varied, although women are said to be one of the most frequent, and are often trivial. The government, insisting on its own justice, has a great deal of trouble with these affairs, and, at the same time, has used them to its own advantage. One of the chief reasons for the failure of Kurdish revolts over the years has been the fact that the leaders are just as interested in the overthrow of each other as in that of the government. Mahmud Beg of the Baradost tribe performed welcome service in aiding the defeat of Mulla Mustafa's abortive rebellion, not because of his loyalty, which need not be questioned, but because of an old feud. It is interesting that certain persons treat their relations with the government in the same way, that is, as a matter between families, carrying on what might be classified as private vendettas with the authorities. If one's brother has been hung or imprisoned, the next step is the assassination of a policeman, not necessarily the

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constables who apprehended the culprit or the judge who pronounced sentence, but "any member of the government tribe." Quite a number of this last type of feud come to light from time to time, and in 1951 one "brigand" Hasan Bania is credited with having disposed of numerous policemen, not primarily occupied with his capture, but engaged in their customary duties. 628 642

Europeans or Americans are apt to lose sight of the deadly nature, sport or not, of the Kurdish vendetta, particularly, as is often the case nowadays, when it is coupled with politics. The investigator was seated one evening in the "club" in Rowanduz with Sayyid Ahmad of Betas, a son of Shaykh Taha, and one of his bodyguards. Sayyid Ahmad was not directly concerned in the Rowanduz feud, but he was a regular guest of Lali Khan and his sympathies lay with the House of Isma'il Beg. It was interesting to notice that when Karim Agha, the son of Kuri Bawil Agha, and hence a possible enemy, entered the garden, Sayyid Ahmad quickly loosened the holster of his pistol and his follower automatically took up a strategic position behind the new visitor, leaning against a wall. On another evening, Sayyid Ahmad forbade, with some violence of expression, a well-meaning person who wished to accompany him across an exposed meadow with a lantern, again, a simple precaution. This atmosphere of violence is an everyday feature of life in Rowanduz, but it must be stressed that actual danger does not in any way extend to the common people nor, under normal circumstances, the 628

to let Mahmud Beg know of their presence and visit his 622
dîwakhana, or he will think they look down on his hospitality, or, worse, do not know him or recognise him as a chieftain." 574

Save for the question of hospitality, it may be seen 423
from the section on administration that the government 649
takes a strong interest in chieftains' activities. The state lays claim to all unregistered land, amîrîya, which includes a large amount of "tribal" and village territory, and would prefer to collect taxes directly from the producers, thus cutting off the most important source of aristocratic revenue. Some of the chieftains, abreast of the times, have attempted to have tribal lands registered in their own names. The execution of the law belongs to 649
the government, either the civil code of the judge or the 692
tribal code of the qaimmaqam. Vengeance is also of the [692]
state, and homicides are to be handled by the police and the courts, rather than the vendetta. Safeguard and sanctuary in a well-policed district are thought to be unnecessary. Modern Iraq is in concept democratic, and [554]
such titles as a'ha, beg, or shaykh, while they are widely used, do not enjoy the sanction of law. The army and the constabulary are thought adequate to handle military exigencies, and the arming of a populace, particularly parties of bodyguards, is considered superfluous, if not dangerous. Thus the Kurdish aristocracy has lost many of 525
its important functions and perogatives. They are no longer 178
leaders in war or administrators, and much of their

Beg, Buri Bamil Agha, and Dalig Agha. Because that of Buri Bamil Agha has suffered adverse fortune, the House of Isma'il Beg, headed by Lali Khan, has the greatest interest in the town, owning considerable property therein. Dalig Agha and his brother As'ad Agha have a house in the town, but their property consists of a village elsewhere in the district. The House of Mohammed 'Ali Agha might be mentioned, for it is nearby at Jindian, and its sons, such as Khalid Agha, spend much of their time in the town. The chieftains, not only of these families but of the district at large, enter into daily life to a large extent. They provide a constant source of gossip and, to some extent, revenue, for they are everyday visitors to the town and make many of their purchases there. One might inquire how young chieftains such as Karim Agha, the son of Buri Bamil Agha, or Khalid Agha of Jindian, spend their day, and the answer is that they do very little aside from visiting friends or strolling about the town, sometimes accompanied by bodyguards. Conversation accounts for a great deal of their time. The chieftains' relations with the government personnel are cordial, although they have nothing in common with the younger officials and officers. An interesting meeting took place between Sayyid Ahmed of Barzan and the army officer, Colonel Khalil Sarghawadi, who had captured him during the last revolt and sent him into exile in southern Iraq. Both parties were amused at the meeting, and treated each other with the best of humor, Sayyid Ahmed,

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to excitement to the government, lowering even stipulate more
on upon rather than exciting alarm. Dagvik showed pain- 632
ingenuity reconciled with more pleasure his appointment to 692
office, for he did not speak Arabic on the time. He learnt
the attitude in charge of him, for example, called "straight"
called his book by abbreviation, and exercised that this
was his name, always addressing the unfortunate officer
as "Straight Dag" until he was finally corrected. In order [222]
to emphasize the type of post he desired for his uncle,
he was forced to refer to instructions of the colonie in
question, and thought his own pleasure, that of a Scottish
aristocrat, a one of the great Dagvik fain, flapping his
arm and crowing to a bewildered Arab orderly, most recon-
dite.

Toward the townspeople, the aristocrats are much more 632
friendly, calling them by name and speaking long hours 545
talking with those of higher station, such as wealthy mer-
chants. They are not fond of either the shopkeepers or the
troops, although are occasionally flicks them there. Another [301]
is they do not marry within their own families, they prefer
the neighbors of the wealthy merchants and landowners of
the town, for these are supposed to be more "refined," and
have to have greater prestige, than any village maiden.
The daughter of Ba'al Ibrahim, for example, is married to
an aristocrat from elsewhere in the district, who hardly
ever (five) wife have used as a proper noun. Among 545
themselves, there is extensive community of interest and 692
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the wives of other officials, although they do not have a [971]
similar position. The wife of an official can be extremely
lonely as far as feminine companionship is concerned. Women
of the lower classes suffer as much inconvenience,
and associate with each other with great freedom. There is [946]
a morgue for women alone in the town, frequented by those [951]
of the lower classes, and is said by the townsmen to be
used more as a clearing-house for idle talk than for place
carnivore.

If the society of adults in Zawadice has its disorder, [958]
there is a very real, but short-lived, democracy for the [965]
children. The youngsters of all officials, aristocrats, [967]
and townspeople, play with each other without any reference
to the ranks of their parents, and choose their leaders in
the same way. The son of a merchant can be "chief-lads" over
the children, and the daughter of a labourer the arbiter of
her playmates. This utopia passes without any apparent
difficulty as the subjugation of life until then to different
codes, seems to subsist and ceases to exist in their fathers'
stage. Sex differentiation, better fitted to the demands of [970]
adjective studies, replaces those of childhood. It must not
be thought, however, that these early affiliations do not
extend into later life, although such acquaintances do
not visit each other's homes.

In concluding this section, it is possible to re- [49]
gard the society of Zawadice not only as that of the town [49]
in Overseas times, but to Iraq and the Middle East at large,
and to present several observations of some importance.

The heart of the matter is to be found in the distinction between a society governed by the state and one ruled by tribal or feudal chieftains. The state is no stranger to the area of the Middle East, for it was in this province that it probably made its first appearance and some of its more complex harmonization of history were evolved. Nevertheless, there are certain places, Darfurian among them, where it is a newcomer, and others, such as Saudi Arabia, where it has yet to appear. Ottoman control in Darfurian was rarely strong, and was characterized by a sort of daily contest between the sentenced authorities, supported by their troops and gendarmes, and the local inhabitants in matters of tax-collection and recruitment for the army. Beyond the borders of Turkey and other well-organized districts, the Ottoman Empire was largely oriented for tribute, the entitlement of its officers and the Sublime Porte, and the Turks, aside from their bureaucrats and the prestige attached to conquerors, did little to tamper with the economy and the social structure of their subjects. Somewhere, before the First World War, was lost by the aristocrats and its merchants, and the empire representative of Ottoman rule was regarded as an everyday annoyance which could be circumvented, bribed, or educated as the occasion demanded. Insofar as the Turks were satisfied with what little money and recruits they were able to collect, they were not considered greatly detrimental to life.

The rise of the modern state in Iraq provides in places such as Kawandaa, good examples of the impingement

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r a new system of society on one that is older. At the
ginning of this section, these two systems were outlined,
he "primitive" one headed by a hereditary aristocracy
nd the "civilized" one by an educated group which in-
ludes property-owners, professional men, and a government
dre. The first is represented in the Rowanduz district
y the Kurdish chieftains and the second by the officials
nd officers of the central government. The second system
s not wholly strange to the area, for the Turks, and
erhaps others before them, conditioned the Kurdish
esponse to the concept of alien rule, if such control was
nly desultory. The new ownership, however, first in
ritish and later in Arab hands, introduced a strong
dministration, something quite new, which, despite a
eries of revolts, penetrated almost all phases of popular
ife. This, as has been seen, has resulted in the dis-
ovement of the local aristocracy, a process which has
een completed in some places and in others is only begin-
ing. The same conflict, with varying results, can be
bserved elsewhere in Iraq and in the Middle East. Among
he "Marsh Arabs" of the southern provinces, for example,
here is a bitter conflict between the local shaykhs and
he government in matters of land ownership and the collec-
ion of taxes. The "Marsh Arabs" also have a record of
evolt, and, like the Kurds, have had many of their
hieftains imprisoned or exiled, such as Shaykh Salim
f the Bani Lam'ad tribe, still in exile at Baghdad.

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day a larger pot from this neighbor, and each time returned one still larger. Finally, as had been his original intention, Abu Nuwas borrowed his neighbor's largest vessel, one of the greatest value because it was large enough to feed a company of soldiers. This he failed to return, keeping it with the intention of selling it. After several days, the neighbor called Abu Nuwas, and inquired greedily if the great vessel had given birth. "God remains," sighed Abu Nuwas piously, "the pot is dead." "What!" shouted the enraged neighbor, "how can a pot die?" Abu Nuwas placed his arm gently on the other's arm and said, "Think carefully what the judge will say to this after you have accepted the offspring of so many pots. How can a pot give birth?" 531

The elder women also tell the children folktales of various types, but it was not possible to record any of them in detail. The townsmen make little use of the mejlis or "club" of the officials and officers, nor are they interested in alcoholic beverages or gambling. A few, while on a journey in Baghdad, Erbil, or Mosul, may be attracted by the cabarets or the houses of prostitution, but these occasions are rare and there are no such institutions in the town or the Rowanduz district. 538 577 [529] [484] [507] [541]

In everyday conversation, politics, both domestic and international, overshadow any other intellectual topic, and, as might be expected, are strongly coloured by Kurdish nationalism. It is unusual to find a group of Kurds discussing matters of philosophy, science, religion, or the like, and such things find a very small part in current interest. The Kurd, it might be said, is not particularly concerned whether the earth is round or flat, but will hold forth on contemporary affairs in the Middle East almost interminably. Kurdish nationalism, as noted at the outset, 521 [445] [466]

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Rowandus

like similar movements among the Arabs, the Greeks, and others, first became a potent factor in everyday life during the nineteenth century, and its principal target at the time was the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Its early protagonists were educated Kurdish officials and officers, organized in the familiar "literary" or "artistic" societies, and from them it spread in more or less extravagant forms to all classes of society. This preoccupation with ethnic independence, however, is not purely political, but IK linked with the impingement of the modern state on a society at once tribal and feudal. To this end the warriors for Kurdish nationalism have been the chieftains, who have something more to gain than the vote, and its orators the men of the educated upper class, a point which must be discussed again in concluding this study. Agents of the Allied Powers left the Kurds under the impression they were to be given an independent state in the settlements which followed the First World War, and, insofar as this has been universally denied them (Kurdish literature, for example, is prohibited in Turkey), it is the starting point of most of their arguments. It is unnecessary to treat these nationalistic sentiments in great detail, because, with the ordinary passage of events in the Middle East, they can be exceedingly ephemeral, the friend of one day becoming the enemy of the next. Needless to say, the Kurds themselves are the heroes of these discussions, and, like many popular political expressions, such utterances

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could scarcely support itself by robbery alone. It is interesting that the Arab Bedouins, among whom the vendetta and brigandage are just as well marked, are not often accused of being a race of savages and criminals. The Bedouin, unlike the Kurd, has been romanticised rather than condemned by those who have had little experience with him. Kurdish life, to be sure, is not distinguished by its intellectual or artistic achievements, but, by the same token, neither is that of Medieval Scotland, Sicily, or Albania, mountainous regions inhabited by peoples of a similar temperament. The most interesting characteristic of Kurdish culture is the way in which it has been moulded by Islam, and, in this, it exhibits similarities to that of Islamic peoples everywhere. It is mute testimony to the character of Islam and to the forces of its protagonists in the Kurdish mountains that the peculiarities which may have obtained in pagan Kurdish society or religion have been so thoroughly submerged into a standard pattern. Aside from minor deviations, one is able to discover little which strikes him as strange or anomalous.

The second object of this study has been the delineation of the impact of the modern state on Kurdish life, and it is necessary to discuss the conclusions reached in this respect in much greater detail than in the first. The Kurds have been subjected, particularly since the Arab conquests, to rulers of one sort or another, the last of whom were the Ottoman Turks, but this control was, for the most part, superficial. Ottoman administration in Kurdistan

was in reality that of a tribute empire, concerned with 648
the collection of taxes and recruits. Even in those two
last tasks there was a contest, often in good humor, be-
tween the governors and the governed, and the victories
were divided. As long as money and men were in reasonably
good evidence, the Turks left the Kurds to their own
devices. They handed down justice of a sort, but most [691]
quarrels never reached their courts. They were not partic-
ularly concerned with homicide, insofar as the murdered
party was not a Turk, and, above all, they did not tamper
with the economic structure of society. The bulk of the [651]
taxes were collected, in the best way possible, from the
chieftains and landowners, never from the farmers and
shepherds. The Kurds regarded these taxes, when they
were forced to pay them, as a sort of levy to some superior
chieftain. Matters of education or public health received [658] [744]
little attention. This does not mean that in certain
other areas of the Ottoman Empire there was not a complex
bureaucratic government, but in Kurdistan it may be
summed up as little more than desultory control. The
gentle character of this administration, compared with that
of today, is indicated by the fact that many Kurds look
back with nostalgia to the "freedom" of Ottoman times.

In ethnological theory the significant difference 121
between primitive and civilized society is held to have its 649
basis in economics. Membership in a primitive society is
defined in terms of kinship relation, usually by "blood,"

4: Hannan E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

CHAPTER I

FIELD OF INVESTIGATION

The Kurds are an Indo-European people whose tongue, which has several dialects, is related to Persian. By religion they are Sunnis of the *shafi'i* rite of Islam. Kurdistan has never existed as a political concept, though the Kurds appear through history to have inhabited the same mountainous areas as they do to-day. To the north their country, whose backbone is the Anti-Taurus, is bounded by a line drawn through Erivan, Erzerum, Erzinjan and then in a crescent through Mar'ash towards Aleppo. To the south-west the line runs along the foot of the mountains to Nusaibin, thereafter to the Tigris and Mosul and then in a straight line to Mandali on the frontier between Iraq and Iran. To the east the limit of the Kurdish area runs in a south-easterly direction from Erivan, comprises the Maku district, part of Khoi, Urmia, Mahabad, Saqqiz and Senna to Kirmanshah. The main road from Kirmanshah to Karind, and thereafter in a straight line to Mandali, roughly forms the border between the actual Kurds and the Lakhs and Lurs related to them.

Descriptions of people who can be taken as the ancestors of the Kurds of our day are found in Xenophon's Anabasis (400 B.C.) and given by Strabo (64 B.C.–20 A.D.). It has been maintained that the Kurds were identical with the Medes of ancient times. In regard to the various theories concerning the origin of the Kurds see Nikitine[1]. The legend concerning a mysterious descent can be found in "Sharafnameh", the history of the Kurds, written in Persian in 1596[2]. Since the Median kingdom succumbed to the Persian king, Cyrus, in 550 B.C., the area that is now Southern Kurdistan was first a part of the Achaemenid kingdom (until 331 B.C.) and was thereafter ruled by the Greek Seleucids, by the Parthians, Persian Sassanids, Arabian caliphs, Mongols and Turkomans, until the Persian Safavi dynasty and the Ottoman empire laid (1639) the boundary between them through Kurdistan. To-day this area, which is inhabited by about 5 million Kurds, is divided between Iran, Turkey and Iraq, with small overlappings in Syria and the Soviet Union[3]. Thus, in 1639, the Persian Kurds were separated from their countrymen, who remained under Turkish rule until the end of the First World War.

At the end of that conflict in 1918 the two Turkish areas, the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets, were united to the Arab State, Iraq, under British mandate, whilst the question of the national status of the third area, the Mosul Vilayet, whose northern mountains were inhabited by Kurds, was made the subject of further negotiation. Inspired by no. 12 of President Wilson's 14 points, the idea was mooted at the peace negotiations at Sèvres in 1920 of creating an autonomous Kurdish state with a prospect of complete independence[4]. This was to comprise the areas east of the Euphrates inhabited

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4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

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by Kurds, including the northern, mountainous part of the Mosul Vilayet. The idea was crystallized in Article 62 (delineation of the area) and Article 64 of the Peace Treaty[5], which, however, was never ratified. At the fail conclusion of peace at Lausanne in 1923, a shattered, mutilated Turkey no longer existed, but instead a strong young republic under Kemal Atatürk, and all idea of an autonomous Kurdish state was abandoned. The whole of the Mosul Vilayet with its rich oil fields around Kirkuk was placed under Iraq, which in 1922 was made a kingdom under Faisal I, the son of the Sharrif of Mecca, but still under British mandate until 1932. The frontier between Iraq and Turkey was fixed along the Bruch or Brussels line by negotiations between Turkey, Iraq and Great Britain at Ankara in 1926. To justifiably disappointed Kurds, who had seen their dream of an independent Kurdistan born at Sèvres and killed at Lausanne, had aired their feelings by repeated national revolts in Turkey[7], Iran[8] and in Iraq. Whereas the Mosul Vilayet was "disputed territory"[9], the British mandate government appointed Sheikh Mahmud (b. 1861, d. 1956)[10] *hakmdar* in Sulaimani, the provincial capital in the Sulaimani Liwa, with guaranteed subsidies. When he became too troublesome for the mandate government proclaiming himself *malik*, king, of Kurdistan, he was replaced in 1919 by Major E. B. Soane[11], who as early as 1906 had accepted Islam and by his great knowledge of Kurdistan over many years was closely in touch with the Kurds. The first Kurdish paper[12] was started on Sept. 20th 1920, and at the same time Kurdish became for the first time the official language of the Administration. However, Soane was recalled to England in 1921 as his wish for an independent Kurdistan no longer conformed to the attitude created towards the end of the peace negotiations at Lausanne. Sheikh Mahmud was once more appointed, which resulted in revolts under his leadership in 1922–24, 1927 and in 1931–31, and under Ahmad of Barzan in 1932. For the political development in these years see Longrig and Stocker[13], and Edmonds[14].

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My personal impression of political conditions amongst the Kurds I lived with in 1957 can be summarized as follows: The Iraqi Kurds in a town like Sulaimani, the intellectual capital of Southern Kurdistan look to the north, to Soviet Russia[15]. It was stated that the small group of Kurds living under the Soviet Union had better facilities to retain their lingual and cultural independence than the Kurds (over one million) in Arab Iraq. In Tashkent, for example, a Kurdish university was said to have been opened. Despite the fact that Beirut University in Lebanon had hitherto always been the place at which well-to-do young Kurds studied, and the Hoybun Committee[16] still existed, the Kurds, whilst I was in Iraqi Kurdistan, looked to the north, to Communism, and hoped that their dream of an independent Kurdistan would some day be realized from that quarter.

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What so previously been written about Kurdish women comes from the pens of men. Having given the following description of the Arab women in Baghdad: "... visions in dark blue with black masks, which sit about in little yellow boxes, and which you are told are women," adding: "... in fact no better device than these hideous shrouds ... could have been invented by Oriental jealousy to snare every prying eye and dump the spirit of libertinism ...."[17] Fraser, 1840, says concerning the Kurdish women (a): "... they do not wear veils like the Persian women, the utmost practised in this way being raising the end of the handkerchief, with which their heads are covered, across their mouths

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

whose patriotic poems in Kurdish are still recited with approval, was already seventy-five years old and thus formed an unbroken literary link with the days when the Baban principality was, in the words of another poet, 'neither subject to the Persians, nor slave-driven by the House of Osman.'

The first Kurdish political club was founded at Constantinople in 1908 by Amin Ali Badr Khan and General Sharif Pasha of Sulaimani. There was a revival of literary activity during the brief honeymoon after the Young Turk revolution of 1909, when periodicals, anthologies and the like were published at Constantinople in both the northern dialect of Bohtan and the southern dialect of Sulaimani. The preeminence in the south of the language of Sulaimani, which has since established itself as the standard vehicle of literary expression not only in Iraq but also on the Persian side of the frontier, is probably due in part to the patronage extended to letters by the later Baban princes, and in part to the foundation at Sulaimani by the Turks of a military school, cadets from which went on to the academy and staff-college at Constantinople, and so reached a level of education denied to other Kurds;[1] these same officers naturally supplied the intellectual element indispensable for a nationalist movement.

A fresh fillip was given to Kurdish aspirations by the military defeat of Turkey in 1918, and by point 12 of President Woodrow Wilson's 'programme of the world's peace' enunciated in January of that year, which stipulated that the non-Turkish nationalities of the Ottoman Empire should be 'assured of an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.' Sharif Pasha headed a Kurdish delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris and secured the insertion in the Treaty of Sèvres (10 August, 1920) of provision for the creation in the north-eastern vilayets of Turkey of an independent Kurdistan which the Kurds of Mosul vilayet would have the right to join.

IV.

When the armistice between the Allies and Turkey was signed at Mudros on 30 October, 1918, the British forces pursuing the defeated enemy up the Tigris were about 40 miles south of Mosul city; they were also in occupation of the line of little towns on the high road between Kifri and Altun Köprü. The Turkish troops were required to be clear of the whole of the Mosul vilayet within a fortnight. British policy, dictated by military considerations but nevertheless in full accord with

[1] It was at Sulaimani in 1918 that Kurdish was first made the official language of the administration; a consequence of this was that a large proportion of the officials in the other Kurdish districts later on were Sulaimani men.

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

the idealistic spirit of the time, was at first to avoid commitments in the hills by setting up one or more semi-autonomous Kurdish provinces, to be loosely attached to whatever regular administration might eventually be established in the plains. Even before the armistice contact had been established with a certain Shaykh Mahmud, head of the leading Sayyid family of Southern Kurdistan, who was informed that any Kurdish groups or tribes in the three *liwas* of Sulaimani, Kirkuk and Arbil which might wish to accept his leadership would be allowed to do so. It soon became evident, however, that the Saykh had overestimated his popularity, and his province was eventually restricted to little more than the *liwa* of Sulaimani. No similar initiative was taken in regard to the Kurdish districts in the *liwa* of Mosul, where there was no articulate Kurdish opinion.

This first experiment in Kurdish autonomy under modern conditions was not a success. Within six months the Shaykh, resenting the limitations placed on his freedom to do exactly as he liked, rebelled. After a short military operation he was captured and deported, and the *liwa* was brought under the direct administration of the Occupation Authority. But quite apart from Shaykh Mahmud's personal ambitions there was always present at Sulaimani, among all classes of the population, an abiding conviction, rooted in their history, that the place contained the germs of a revived and extensive Kurdish state of which it was the preordained capital. The belief had little justification either in its physical appearance and commercial importance or in the academic attainments and political experience of its citizens, but it was always in the air. The proposal that Sulaimani with the adjacent districts should once more become an autonomous territory, therefore, had not come to the people as anything strange.

For the other political leaders the fall of Mahmud was thus no reason for renouncing the glittering prize brought so near by the Treaty of Sèvres. Assurances had been given in the British Parliament that the Kurds would not be forced to come under an Arab government against their will, and when the Provisional National Government of Iraq was formed in November, 1920, Sulaimani remained under the direct control of the British High Commissioner. Kirkuk (which then included Arbil) did accept a *Mutasarrif* (Governor) nominated by the new government, but he, like all the other officials, was a local man, and Turkish, the language of the educated urban classes (but not of the majority of the inhabitants), continued to be used for official purposes. When in June, 1921, the Amir Faysal arrived in Iraq as the candidate sponsored by the British Government for the throne Sulaimani refused to participate in the referendum; Kirkuk did participate but accounted for most of the

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

175 negative votes cast. No representative from either *liwa* attended the 668 accession ceremonies.

648 A difficult situation had been further complicated by the promulgation in January, 1920, by the Turkish Cabinet of a manifesto known as the 'National Pact' which, while conceding the right to self-determination of the Arabs south of the armistice line of 1918, refused to contemplate the surrender of the Mosul vilayet. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed by the representatives of the Sultan nine months later, was never ratified. For the next five years the Kurds were subjected to a campaign of intensive propaganda from Turkey: threats of invasion, clandestine correspondence with urban and tribal leaders, open incitements to rebellion, warnings to 'traitors,' and pervading all, the religious appeal for loyalty to the Sultan-Caliph (until the Caliphate was abolished in March 1924). Small bodies of uniformed Turkish troops actually crossed the border at various points in support of the restless tribes. The administrative boundary in Arbil and parts of Mosul was withdrawn to the edge of the plains, and in September, 1922, the whole of Sulaimani was evacuated. Shaykh Mahmud was brought back in return for an undertaking that he would secure the expulsion of the Turks from the *liwa* and that he would refrain from interfering in the neighbouring *liwas* of Kirkuk and Arbil. But in the intoxicating mountain air these promises were soon forgotten: [669] in November the Shaykh proclaimed himself 'King of Kurdistan,' claimed the whole country down to the Jabal Hamrin as part of his 'Kingdom,' and so far from expelling the Turks sought to use their presence as a lever to press his ambitions. In December the British and Iraqi governments, hoping to rally the more moderate Kurds to resist the aggressor, made a joint communication to certain friendly leaders recognizing 'the right of the Kurds of Iraq to set up a Kurdish government' which should send responsible delegates as soon as possible to discuss boundaries and political and economic relations; but there was nobody capable of taking advantage of the offer, which lapsed.[8]

The prevailing uncertainty and unrest were actually aggravated by the signature at Lausanne in July, 1923, of a Treaty of Peace between the Allies and Turkey, for it specifically excluded the Mosul question from the settlement. In August, 1924, the dispute was referred to the League of Nations. A Commission was sent to examine the problem on the spot, and, in December, 1925, the Council awarded the vilayet to Iraq subject to guarantees that regard would be paid to the 'desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed

[8] The activities of Shaykh Mahmud necessitated a series of air and military operations in the years that followed. Sulaimani town itself was occupied by the Iraqi Army in July, 1924; but the Shaykh continued to harry the administration until June, 1927, when he submitted. He took up arms again in 1930 in sympathy with the Imprisoned Intellectuals (see below) but gave himself up in 1931.

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the language of all these services.' The Turkish government at first refused to accept the decision but, by a tripartite treaty between the United Kingdom, Iraq and Turkey signed at Ankara in June, 1926, finally renounced its sovereignty over the Mosul vilayet. The administration of the three *liwas* was then assimilated to that of the rest of Iraq except in the matter of the official language and the race of the officials.

The Turkish menace was hardly out of the way when the approach of the end of the Mandate for Iraq roused misgivings among the leaders of Kurdish opinion as to the value of the guarantees. Petitions to the League were treated as treason, and in 1930 and 1931 many highly respected Kurdish intellectuals were imprisoned. When the application of Iraq for admission to the League came up for consideration in 1932 the Council required and received from the Iraqi government a written Declaration, which was to rank as part of the Constitution, reaffirming its undertakings in regard to the minorities. A specific law was enacted defining the areas within which Kurdish and Turkish should be the languages of the local administration, of the law courts, and of primary education.

For the next few years there was little manifestation of political nationalism in Iraq. The hard logic of facts seemed to have persuaded the leaders, some sooner, some later, that their hopes were impossible of realization; most of them settled down quietly, salving their patriotic consciences, perhaps, with the vague idea that one day another world cataclysm might give their sons or grandsons their opportunity and that in the meantime any agitation would do more harm than good.

During the year preceding the outbreak of the Second World War there were indications that the German Legation in Baghdad was spreading propaganda, especially among young men of the official classes, that the Kurds had been grossly betrayed by Britain at the end of the last war but that a victorious Germany was ready to create an independent Kurdistan after the next. But after the actual outbreak of hostilities the elder realists remained convinced that neither side was likely to alienate the Arabs for a small and internationally unimportant people like the Kurds, and preferred to take no initiative. In the spring of 1941, when Rashid 'Ali staged his *coup d'état* against the Regent and the lawful government of Iraq, Shaykh Mahmud escaped from Baghdad, where he had been living in honourable exile, and did indeed obtain some support from the younger generation and among the tribes for the idea of a revolt based on the belief that, 'the unreliability of the Arabs' having now become manifest, the Allies would no longer hesitate to give the Kurds

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) B57 MA11 Kurd MA11

175 their 'rights'; but with the restoration of the Regent, a staunch friend
663 of the Allies, the movement, such as it was, lost all momentum.
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'Do as you would be done by' is not a maxim that seems to have appealed very much to the various formerly subject peoples, in Europe or in Asia, who have been liberated since 1918, and it was hardly to be expected that the Arabs of Iraq would prove an exception. Even in Ottoman times the three vilayets had been considered as constituting a single unit, Turkish Arabia in British official parlance, and any scheme of partition on *racial lines* to meet the aspirations of a minority was as unpalatable as similar ideas have been to majorities elsewhere. Against any suggestion that the central government should make a special effort to conciliate the Kurds by recognizing their existence *qua* Kurds and not merely as individuals enjoying the ordinary civil liberties like anybody else, it was at first argued that since the greater part of Kurdistan lay outside Iraq any concession in this direction could only encourage the separatist tendencies of the Kurds of Iraq and that it would lead to demands for similar privileges from other racial or religious groups.

On the Kurdish side, quite apart from the initial unwillingness to accept subordination to the Arab who had been a subject race like themselves, it was felt that the guarantees given to the League in 1925 and again in 1932 were being either ignored or at any rate grudgingly implemented. Statistics could be adduced to show that the Kurdish districts were not getting their fair share of the social services or development projects. Particularly bitter were complaints that the schools were inadequate in both quality and number, that failure to prepare and distribute school-books in Kurdish was making a mockery of the promises regarding the language instruction, and that Kurdish students were not being accepted for institutions of higher education or educational missions abroad. The big-spending Department of Irrigation was not represented in the north at all. In the sphere of Public Works there were complaints that all the emphasis was on police posts, and it was indeed the fact that even the construction of roads was for some years held back by the defeatist strategy of a Ministry of Defence which regarded them as facilities for an invader rather than a means of consolidating the administration and benefiting the population. The claim, made at the League of Nations and elsewhere, that the Kurds were always adequately represented in the Cabinet was denounced as disingenuous, since the Ministers in question, even if they could claim remote Kurdish origin, generally belonged to families long expatriated and were Arab rather than Kurdish in sentiment.

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

Insofar as these grievances had some foundation in fact enough has already been said to show that the prevailing state of affairs was due, in part at any rate, to political circumstances beyond the control of the government, and in part to the restlessness of the Kurds themselves which for long periods had brought the administration in a large part of Kurdistan to a standstill. Some of the neglect, too, was undoubtedly due not to malice but to a tendency, not unknown elsewhere, for the higher authorities to take more thought for the parts of the country near the center than for the distant outposts.

However that may be, the result was that just when the earlier agitators were developing into elder statesmen who, sobered by experience, no longer regarded separation as feasible or desirable there was growing up a new generation nurtured on a sense of grievance and frustration. Resentment was further embittered by insulting references to the minorities not infrequently made by pan-Arab orators in moments of fanatical exaltation. In all the countries of the Middle East the western Powers are regarded as the supporters of the old reactionary Beys and Pashas who have retained most of the political power in their own hands (the charge is unfair but it would prolong this paper unduly to examine it here). It is only to be expected, then, that disgruntled youth (and especially young Kurds with a racial added to a social grievance) should look to Russia for its inspiration. The Russians have long been the neighbours of the Kurds through the Caucasian provinces, and, as we have seen, a small part of Kurdistan lies within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. Even before 1918 Kurdish malcontents in Turkey and Persia were accustomed to seek support from the Russians. For the Russians exploitation of Kurdish unrest would be nothing new, indeed something of the kind has been seen comparatively recently at the time of the short-lived 'Kurdish Republic' of Mahabad in Persian Kurdistan, and again in 1947 when Mulla Mustafa of Barzan, a fugitive rebel from Iraq, was welcomed in Soviet Armenia, given high military rank, and encouraged to broadcast in Kurdish from Erivan.

But with every year that passes any concerted armed revolt becomes more improbable. The mercantile classes, realizing as they do that economically the Kurdish north is bound hand and foot to Baghdad, have never shown any enthusiasm for anything but the mildest form of nationalism, and the programme of development now in hand must have the effect of binding the whole country together more closely than ever before. The old loyalties to religious Shaykhs and tribal Aghas have been too deeply undermined for any self-appointed leader to command a serious measure of support in any violent adventure. The complexity of modern weapons has given the government an overwhelming advantage

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

over tribesmen armed only with rifles and limited supplies of ammunition, and, with the advent of aircraft and new types of mechanical transport suitable for rough country, even their former advantage of superior mobility has passed to the forces of law and order. In any case, those of the old stormy petrels who are still alive have been softened by a growing dependence on the amenities of the towns and on modern luxuries brought within reach by improved communications, while their sons, most of whom have been educated in government schools, are tending to become dependent, like the rest of the new middle class, on regular employment in the army, the civil service, or the professions. Nationalistic agitation might perhaps seek to profit from any agrarian unrest, but apart from this it is likely to express itself in little more than the clandestine circulation of leaflets by societies calling themselves 'communist' or occasional localized riots by students and bazaar loafers.

Whatever the mistakes and short-comings of the past, Iraq is the one country where the existence of the Kurds as such has come to be officially recognized. In Sulaimani and Arbil especially not only is Kurdish the official language but the whole atmosphere of the administration is Kurdish. The sense of being at the mercy of an uncomprehending bureaucracy in a distant capital has been mitigated by a recent measure of devolution applying to the whole country, the Provincial Administration Law, whereby funds are placed at the disposal of, or may be raised by, the local authorities to be spent in accordance with policies locally determined. In spite of earlier handicaps Kurds have risen to the highest offices. One of the intellectuals imprisoned in 1931 has since held the portfolio of Education, and all the necessary books for the primary classes are now available in good, idiomatic Kurdish. A son of Shaykh Mahmud and one of the Shaykh's principal lieutenants, an officer of great ability, have been Minister of Social Affairs in different Cabinets. For two or three years past the Minister of the Interior (a key office, second only to that of Prime Minister) and the *Mutasarrif* of Mosul (the senior provincial governorship) have been Kurds born and bred in Sulaimani. Fair numbers of students are now being sent to Europe and America. If there was ever any justification for the old fear that the Kurds of Iraq would look north or east for their salvation, there can be very little in it now. The present Prime Minister, General Nuri al-Sa'id, has a comprehending and liberal approach to the Kurdish question. It is still too early to say that all the old wounds have been healed, but there seems to be a new spirit abroad that augurs well for the future.

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MAll Kurd MAll
Rowanduz

464 241 late June and threshing proceeds steadily from July to October. The much smaller rice harvest comes about the end of September. With less wheat and no rice, threshing could be finished by mid-september leaving labour free for the main work of the tobacco harvest. On the other hand the tobacco plant requires a good deal of finicky attention during the early stages of its growth which coincide with the wheat harvest. It is possible therefore that any radical increase in the tobacco cultivation is dependent upon the introduction of improved methods of threshing. A much greater difficulty arises from the fact that the change in labour requirements would not be equally distributed as between different households. Whereas at present each household has approximately the same programme of work, the situation would be greatly complicated if one man's land was devoted to tobacco and his neighbour's only to wheat. The difficulty could be avoided if all the tobacco cultivation were 'owned' by the Agha; - the commoner being under obligation to work for his Agha but not for a fellow commoner. Such a development would never be countenanced by the Government however since the system would be regarded as "exploitation" of the tribesmen by his chief."

249 • 648 Capital. The additional capital required for tobacco as opposed to cereal cultivation is not very significant. The Government is prepared to supply [illegible] so far as I know the process of drying does not require any special technical apparatus. The reorganisation of the irrigation system would of course be an initial 'capital' expenditure for the community concerned.

Technique. On the other hand the mere statement that Government is prepared to offer expert advice rather overemplifies the social aspects of the technical problem. I have already mentioned that the native Kurdish tobacco cured in the traditional manner results in a powdery substance that is quite useless for the purposes of a modern factory. In order to produce a marketable product, the farmer has to be taught entirely new methods. The reformer is here up against several types of difficulty. Firstly there is a simple conservative resistance, the dislike of new methods, not simply because they are new but because the practitioner in the old methods thinks he knows best. But there are other difficulties of a much more intricate kind. Here is an example.

249 609 648 The Government are prepared to supply approved villages with a trained expert to supervise the growing and harvesting of tobacco. Such a man was supplied to the village of Balash. He was a Kurd, but a townsman from the plains and by mountain standards a man of low moral

• In Batas, where in functional terms the Assyrian Bishop takes the place of the Agha, the tobacco crop is owned by the Church, and difficulties over individual labour requirements thus avoided. But then a Christian Bishop is obviously not the same thing as a tribal Aghal

character; it was alleged that he corrupted the villagers with alcohol and gambling and attempted to seduce their daughters, in particular the Malik's daughter, in fact he was altogether a scoundrel. In due course he was found in the high road with two bullets through his body. The police took action. Two harmless looking wanads from another tribe were brought before the courts and on the basis of somewhat elaborate circumstantial evidence convicted of murder. Sentence however was never carried out since the 'criminals' curiously disappeared a few days after the trial. Whatever was the truth of this matter, local rumour had no doubts on the subject. The bullet wounds, the arrest and conviction of the wanads were all a frame up by the police, who had the sense not to fish in troubled waters. The murdered man had really died of strangulation - hanged in the Guest House of Sheikh Mohammed, Agha of Balash and chief of the Balik. 609 249 648.

This story was told me by Hamid Amin of Rowanduz who was always eager to start a slur on his cousin Sheikh Mohammed. It appeared however to have some general currency since, when I was discussing the disappearance of the local schoolmaster with the Agha of Bayat, he referred to the Balash story. "These small Government servants! What do you expect? They're all scoundrels".

Whether the story is true or not is irrelevant, the effect among the Balik is that Sheikh Mohammed's prestige is not as great as formerly, the fact, or even the rumour, that he had to hang his first and only agricultural adviser is a sufficient deterrent for any lesser Aghas who may be contemplating agricultural reform within their own communities. This example brings out well how a problem which on the surface is purely economic may in practice be affected by a mass of seemingly irrelevant considerations in the field of ethics, tribal law, politics and religion.

To sum up then. We have seen how the necessity for developing an export trade implies the necessity for increasing the tobacco acreage at the expense of cereal acreage, and I have tried to analyse out the forces of resistance which serve to prevent any immediate response to this incentive. Nevertheless the incentive is clearly very great. I was told for instance in Beine that whereas in the old days the crops of the entire village had been worth barely £50 in cash, the tobacco sales in 1937 alone totalled £2,500. I believe therefore that in the hills also some radical alteration in the economic of agriculture must take place in the near future. 433 249 174

But it must be recognized that any such development must bring about fundamental changes both in the ideology of the people and of their social organization. As things are, the hill country farmer sets out first of all to grow sufficient food for himself and his family. Only when he is assured of that does he turn his attention to the cultivation of luxury products such as tobacco. He starts to aim at

[illegible] Roosevelt

[illegible]

● 643

[For Soviet influence and activities in relation to the Finnish rebellion of [illegible], see category IVT.]

[illegible]

[illegible]

In September 1941, the British and Soviet forces invaded Iran, crushing over the resistance patriotically mounted by Riza Shah Pahlavi. As his soldiers surrendered, they sold or surrendered their arms to the tribes which still retained the shadowy semblance of Iran, holding to their organization, norms, and way of life in spite of the old Shah's efforts to subdue them. Among those that benefited from the ensuing collapse were the Kurdish tribes occupying the mountains along the Iraqi and Turkish borders from Mahabad, in the shadow of Mount Ararat in the north, to Qasr-i-Shirin, on the Kermanshah-Baghdad road in the south.

In the north, the Kurdish tribes in the mountain wall of Lake Urmiah found themselves surrounded by the strong Soviet garrisons in Rezaieh, Shahpur, Khoi, and Miyan. In the absence of effective Iranian authority, the Soviets maintained direct relations with the tribes — the Jalali in the north, the Shikak in the mountainous wash of Shahpur, and the Dizaki west of Rezaieh. The chiefs of these tribes were allowed to manage their own affairs by the Soviets, who only required that they maintain security and provide grain for the Red Army. In the southern extension of the Kurdish area, near the Kermanshah-Baghdad road — one of the main supply links between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union — British troops kept the tribes quiet.

It was in the large area between the British and Soviet forces, in the vacuum left by the fleeing Iranians, that the Kurds were able to regain their autonomy. In fact the two main centers of disturbance were Sharbiyan and the Avroman Mountains, where Mahmud Khan of Kani-Sawa established a powerful hegemony; and Rowanduz, where Hama Rashid Khan, long in exile in Iraq, built up a principality which included Soran and Barzinja. Both of these tribal chiefs were recognized for a time by the Iranian Government as semi-official governors of their areas, but soon these areas were lost by the weakened Iranian Army. By the fall of 1943, all of Kurdistan south of the Soviet-Rezaieh-Dashtabi line was again firmly in government hands. The regions now thus returned to the world were between this line and the Soviet forces based on Rezaieh, in which there was only one town of any size — Mahabad, formerly known as Sauj Bulagh, a few miles south of Lake Urmiah.

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CURRENT PROBLEMS OF MINORITIES

It has largely been inevitable that the present national frontiers, drawn in lands where economic and social divisions are strong, and where political consciousness is mostly in the first stage of development, should in some measure give incomplete realization to the political needs and aspirations of Middle Eastern peoples. Although it is probably impossible to devise frontiers which would be even moderately satisfactory in this respect, present boundaries offer a number of outstanding difficulties. Palestine is a problem on its own, but in addition there other communities—the Kurds, the Armenians, and the Assyrian Christians—find themselves without a political future, and present special problems to the national governments of the various states in which they live.

The Kurds are a semi-nomadic pastoral people, living in the highlands of eastern Anatolia and the north-western Zagros. Transhumance between summer pastures on the higher mountain slopes, and winter quarters in the valleys and lowlands (sometimes involving movements between widely separated districts), has brought the Kurds into conflict with the four national governments, because their homeland is now divided among Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. It has been said of this people that they have claims to racial purity and to continuity of culture that are stronger than those of any European nation, since the Kurds have been settled in their present home since about 1400 B.C.; but the term "culture" must be taken in a limited sense, for the Kurds are conservative as a farm and pasturage people, and their social organization has not progressed beyond the level of tribal grouping. Their occupation of eastern Anatolia and the northern Zagros has given them command of a number of important trade-routes, from which they have derived considerable revenue by means of heavy exactions on trading caravans. The Kurds have the reputation of being pre-eminently a people that it is unsafe to trifle with, and their tendency to direct an right at moving objects has kept outside interference to a minimum.[1] Even the Ottoman Turks could do little to subjugate them, and they remained free from Turkish taxation and military conscription.

The Kurds were, however, employed by the Turks as agents in persecuting Christian minorities—chiefly the Armenians. The Kurds

[1] This is the result of a succession of travellers in the region, from Xenophon's Ten Thousand to Major Soane and the Near East Relief Commission of 1919.

St. Fisher 8-4 (Jan 4m4) 1958 WS Middle East
Kurd MA1

claim the right of wintering in the Christian villages of Armenia and, as fanatical Moslems, they indulged on occasion in massacres of their unwilling Christian hosts—this often with the connivance or tacit approval of the Turks, who were not reluctant to see the Christian communities of Asia Minor decrease in numbers.

For obvious reasons, detailed figures as to the number of the Kurds are not available,* but estimates, most of them much out of date, give a total of some 7 millions, distributed as follows:

Turkey	3,250,000
Iraq (1949)	850,000
Iran	700,000
Bolshevistan	350,000
Transcaucasian Russia (1921)	175,000
Syria	100,000
Afghanistan	50,000

The Kurds cannot be said to have any advanced political feeling, and, even less than the Bedouin Arabs, have rarely been able to combine for long in a stable, large-scale political organization. Individualism and local tribal feeling are the chief characteristics. Kurdish political activity has been negative: that is, strongly against any other group that has tried to rule them, and their proclivities tends to be anti-governmental, whatever the composition of the latter may be, rather than for pro-Kurdish aims. Since 1925 there have been ten serious revolts by the Kurds against various national governments—two against Turkey, four in Iran, and four in Iraq. One of these, in 1947, made use of weapons looted from Iranian military depots. Such revolts lend themselves to intervention by outside powers; and an American view* is that a Kurdish revolt against Iran in 1946 had such support from Russia, with the aim of embarrassing the Iranian government. Little was finally achieved, however: one factor may have been the importance at the time of American lend-lend supplies to Russia, as the result of which the U.S. was able to exert some moderating influence on Russian policy.

Since 1927, a Kurdish independence movement, the "Khoibun", has been in existence, but its activities have hitherto had little success, the main obstacle being jealousy, division, and lack of co-operation among the Kurds themselves. An attempt was made to enlist

* In modern Turkish practice the Kurds are described as "Mountain Turks".
* One of Professor W. L. Westermann.

reminding the dancer of a bagpipe and the other a plaintive Kurdish dancing, however, is by no means so strenuous as Scottish. Kurds and all other mountain dwellers in Kurdistan dance what is known as the chain-dance, similar to that which is, I believe, commonly seen in the Balkans. The dancers join hands and form a ring. The piper and a drummer with a sort of water drum stand in the middle, and the dance consists of fairly intricate footwork while the circle moves slowly round. Often one dancer who fancy themselves as budding Nijinskys do solo dances inside the circle. Amongst the Kurds the men and women dance separately, but with the Christians onto the two sexes dance together. This does not mean, however, that Kurdish women are completely segregated or kept by themselves. As a matter of fact, they possess considerable freedom and may be seen gadabout the town, visiting friends or engaged in other tasks on the mountainside, often far from their villages.

Up to five years ago the Barzan district of Kurdistan retained all of its savage and primitive features. Government had not penetrated and Sheikh Ahmed, a religious fanatic, was dictator. With the help of his brothers and a standing army of several hundred men he completely dominated the impoverished inhabitants, who had the sheikh's bodyguard perpetually billeted on them and who had to provide them with food, clothing and tobacco and anything else they might fancy. Any protests on the part of the villagers were discouraged by the strongest methods. Such complete ascendancy did Sheikh Ahmed gain over his savage and illiterate people that they began to look upon him as a god and, though Moslems in name, turned their faces towards him in prayer rather than towards Mecca, as tradition demands. There was a Mullah in the district called Mullah Taj, who represented himself to be the prophet of this new god. The Mullah was a very fiery and eloquent speaker and, unfortunately for himself, his fame began to surpass even that of the deity. This could not of course be tolerated, and one of Sheikh Ahmed's brothers "bumped off" the presumptuous prophet. Up to that time the Barzan had been crowned, but now the Sheikh issued orders for the destruction of all copies to be found. He also withdrew the ban on the eating of pork, for wild pig were plentiful in Barzan. Armed reinforcements were sent out beyond the Barzan bounds, and villages which refused to accept the Sheikh were burned and a number of the male inhabitants put to death. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and the Iraq Government was forced to take action in conjunction with the British Royal Air Force.

A.: Dere. The terrain was exceedingly mountainous and thickly wooded and there were many caves in which to shelter from bombs or machine-gunning from the air. The Sheikh's followers, too, were very hardy and mobile. Without very efficient air action, which aimed at destroying the morale of the Kurds by purposefully harassing them rather than by slaying them, to gain a definite result would have been a very costly affair. As it was the Sheikh and his followers were eventually driven into Turkey and after surrendering to the Turkish authorities were handed over to the 'Iraq Government. It was found that the Sheikh, his brothers and the remnants of the wandering army could not be fit in with any regular administration, and so they have been settled in small bodies in southern Kurdistan near Sulaimani, where they will not be in a position to cause further trouble. The Barzanis have now reverted to the Islamic faith.

Roads

What has really soured the Kurds is the Government policy of making roads through the mountains, just as General Wade did in Scotland with similar results. Good roads now exist from Arbil, where Alexander the Great defeated King Darius III. in 331 B.C., to the Persian frontier at Rowanduz and from Dohuq to Amadia. Both these roads represent considerable engineering feats and carry a good volume of traffic. The Rowanduz road was that which a nomadic Kurdish tribe, the Herki, with their flocks and herds, used on their annual migrations from 'Iraq to their summer grazing grounds in Iran. During recent years difficulties arose between the nomads and the 'Iraqi Government, and the former now remain in 'Iraq for the summer. It has not been easy to find grazing for them there, as other nomadic tribes had already been forbidden by the Turkish Government to graze in Turkey and had occupied practically all the open grazing. The 'Iraq Government, too, has been attempting to populate summer resorts in Kurdistan and so prevent the flow of money to Syria and the Lebanon, where good summer amenities exist. I am afraid, however, that so far this policy has not been very successful. Good summer resorts require the expenditure of much money, and the attempts at providing suitable summer accommodation have, I regret, tended to spoil what was originally beautiful scenery.

The little town of Zakho in western Kurdistan has greatly benefited by the improvement in public security and communications and is

evaluation of the Kurdish factor. From the cultural point of view the Kurds were still an unwritten sheet of paper. Soviet Russia, as the communist strategists may have argued, thus stood the chance of exercising a paramount influence on the development and the character of a future Kurdish culture, if she only tried.

The raw material for such a Soviet experiment was the small Kurdish minority in Transcaucasia. The exact number of the Kurds in Soviet Russia is as difficult to ascertain as their number in any other country. Officially Russia had only 54,700 Kurds in 1926 and 45,800 in 1939, but unofficial pre-war data recorded as many as 80,000, of whom 40,000 were in Azerbaidzhan, 23,000 in Armenia and the rest in Georgia and Turkmenistan. Only in Armenia and Azerbaidzhan were the Kurds a political problem.

For a long time neither Azerbaidzhani nor Armenian communists seemed to have grasped the importance of the Kurds within the framework of a far-sighted Soviet policy in the Middle East. They either neglected the Kurdish minorities living in their respective republics or even tried to deprive them of their national character.

The Armenian communists disliked the Kurds in view of the role which the latter had played in the Armenian massacres, and thus showed not the slightest interest in their well-being and their mobilization for the Soviet State. Kurds in Armenia were not entrusted with political and social work, no skilled workers were recruited from among them and Kurdish peasants were not even organized into collective farms.[36] In 1936, the Soviet central Government strongly reprimanded the Armenian communists for letting national minorities interfere with their Kurdish policy.

All the mistakes which local Transcaucasian authorities committed in handling the Kurdish question in the inter-war period proved to be unimportant at a moment when Russia was able to use the Kurdish issue on a big scale. Her success in handling the problem was then indisputable. Colonel W. G. Elphinston, who was in charge of Kurdish affairs as a British Middle East Intelligence Officer, said that the effects of propaganda in the Kurdish language originating in the Kurdish community in the U.S.S.R. made themselves felt as far away as Syria, and communist pamphlets in Kurdish penetrated as far as Cairo.[37]

The Kurdish group outside the U.S.S.R. most directly affected by Russian policy and propaganda were the Persian Kurds whose country was occupied by the Red Army between 1941 and 1946. The Soviet occupation authorities did not spread communist ideas among the Kurds; they did not propagate collectivization and nationalization. All they aimed at was to make the Kurds respectful to Soviet Russia, the Russian Army and Stalin. The Kurdish Republic set up with Russian help in 1946 under Qazi Muhammad as Prime Minister was a national

Kurdish State and not communist. It existed for only nine months, despite the Treaty of Alliance for twenty years which it had concluded with another Soviet-sponsored government, the autonomous administration of Persian Azerbaidzhan.

Even such short-lived experiments as the Kurdish Republic of 1946 can become an important factor in the national tradition of a people, who, like the Kurds, are living under foreign rule. Experiments of that kind are apt to create a myth which ultimately may have a greater impact on the national development of the people than the original event itself. From year to year the Kurdish Republic of Qazzi Mohammed may appear to the Kurds more splendid and more powerful, particularly if Soviet propaganda does its share by reminding the Kurds of the downfall of 'their' republic and recalling the part which Russia played in its foundation. Soviet propaganda is indeed taking every opportunity of referring back to the glorious times when two pictures decorated the walls of the houses of many a Kurdish sheikh – that of Qazzi Mohammed, the Kurdish leader, hanged by the Persians in March 1947, and that of Generalissimo Stalin.[88]

Despite the collapse of 'Free Kurdistan' Soviet Russia has nevertheless made great progress in mastering the Kurdish problem. Kurdish chieftains became acquainted with Soviet institutions and Soviet ideology while the Russian conception of Persia's Kurdish territories lasted. Many Persian Kurds joined their countrymen already living in Soviet Transcaucasia and Kurdish culture 'national in form and socialist in content' developed: 200 Kurdish pamphlets and books had been published in the Soviet Union by 1948.[89] Nor was there any shortage of qualified Kurdish personnel in the Soviet Union after the war. On the contrary, Soviet propaganda was able to boast of Kurdish 'state dignitaries and outstanding workers in culture and science', who had sprung up among the Russian Kurds. A Kurdish Soviet poet, Amin Arshal, is the 'author of wonderful verses on the Soviet homeland'. Another Kurdish poet, Jusuph Jalil, translated Russian classics into his native tongue. A Kurdish philologist, Nure Pulatova, a graduate of Leningrad University, became the only Kurdish woman scholar in the world.[90] And lastly, between 1946 and 1950 the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. included a Kurdish deputy, Semend Alkevich Sinbandilov.

However important the recent Soviet experiments with the Russian Kurds may be, the latter represent not even 3 per cent of the entire Kurdish people. Soviet Russia must bring either the Turkish or the Persian Kurds within her orbit if she wants to make a success of her 'Kurdish policy'. It remains to be seen whether the political dynamic of the U.S.S.R. and the ideological power of Bolshevism will be sufficient to accomplish this aim.